

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: A BANQUET IN GUANGZHOU

VENUE: GUANGZHOU

DATE: 27 NOV 1985

TIME:

Excellencies;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a pleasure for my wife and I, and members of my delegation, to have this opportunity to visit and spend some time in Guangdong Province and in this city of Guangzhou. By all counts, this is a vibrant city, charged with enthusiasm for change and progress. Frankly, I must admit to being surprised at just how rapidly your city has responded to your Government's call for modernisation. In almost every sphere of your city's life, old ways and methods are being discarded, while there is an evident eagerness to experiment with new ideas. In short I see a new China taking shape right within this city and more than ever I am convinced that your Government's programme of modernisation will succeed.

2. In this environment of rapid change, I am delighted to note that some things have not changed. I refer of course to China's well-known tradition for hospitality. My wife and I, and members of my delegation, are touched by the warm welcome you have extended to us, by your gracious hospitality and by your sentiments of friendship. For this we extend our appreciation and gratitude and we fully reciprocate your sentiments of friendship.

3. Excellency, of all China's provinces, Guangdong Province is perhaps the most well known in Malaysia. Each year, many hundreds of Malaysian traders visit Guangzhou for the biannual trade fairs which have become an institution in its own right. Of greater significance is the fact that Guangdong province is the ancestral home of quite a few Malaysian citizens. This historical link has served as an important bridge for economics and trade which had benefitted both countries. We must however appreciate that with the passage of time family ties become less and less tangible. As we develop our nations' distinctive characteristic such links as there are will diminish. It would be futile to go in search of what is no longer there or to attempt to revive that which has been severed by choice, history and destiny. We should look instead to the future where purely ancestral ties will be replaced by friendship between the Malaysian people as a whole and the

Chinese people. The businessmen in my delegation are truly representative of the Malaysian people and it is my hope that the contacts they establish during this short visit to Guangzhou will also serve to strengthen the friendship between the Malaysian and Chinese peoples.

4. Excellency, tomorrow my delegation and I will depart China for home. On the eve of my departure, please allow me to request you to convey to the Government of China my sincere appreciation for the kind invitation to visit China and for the warm hospitality that has been lavished upon us. I will take with me many pleasant memories of my visit to your country. More importantly, I return to Malaysia greatly encouraged and convinced that though there are problems still to be overcome, the prospects for further improving our relations are excellent. The objectives in our bilateral relations which we have set for ourselves will entail much work and great commitment but they are attainable.

5. Before I conclude, may I invite you all to join me in a toast:-

- to the good health of His Excellency
- to the success of Guangdong's development
- and to the friendship between Malaysia and China.

Thank you.